

Psychological Ailments In The Working Environment Of Oil & Gas Sector – An Area Of Eminence In Health Risk Globally

M.Panbarasan, R.Karthikeshwaran, J.Sudharsan, Vivek Thamizhmani

Abstract: Psychological ailments are the major reason for the low performance in workplace. Based on the level of the disorder, the performance of the employer and productivity of the company varies accordingly. The major psychological disorders arise due to mental stress, loneliness, depression, anxiety, relationship problems, loss of loved ones, negative thoughts, sorrow, fear, addiction, self-harm, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities and other mental illness. Mental illness now emerging as a major safety hazard in the workplace, organizations should keep an eye on organizing the mental health safety programs to all their employees which ensures the enhanced safety and performance of them. Therapists, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Social workers, Physicians and others involved in curing of mental illness ailment can heal them through various type of treatment such as therapy, counselling and medication for each employee through one to one interaction. General mental health programs has to be carried out to improve awareness, staff knowledge and managerial education about the way of recognition of the signs of poor mental health and its cure by offering workplace adjustments and assignments as per the mentality of the workers. This study facilitates the early recovery of mental illness.

IndexTerms: Awareness, Health, Mental illness, Performance, Productivity, Psychology, Work balance

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Mental health

“Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” This statement was given by world health organization (WHO) regarding the role played by mental health in the well-being of self as well as the society. [21] The WHO also emphasizes the necessity of mental health for the betterment of health as follows, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” [20] In India, the mental health care act, 2017 states that “An act to provide for mental health care and services for persons with mental illness and to protect, promote and fulfill the rights of such persons during delivery of mental healthcare and services and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.” [19]

1.2. Area of study

As per the WHO statistics, 25% of the people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at any one point of time in their life cycle. Nearly 4.5 crore people were suffered by mental illness currently and puts mental disorder is the major reason of ill-health and disability around the globe. [1] In the current alarming situation, the mental health is impacted by the step-up of organizational change, technology advancements, and workplace requirements.

Out of which, the workplace is the area of fundamental risk to the mental illness of the workers globally. Unexpectedly the workplace pressure intensifies the risk of pre-existing mental health issues. The mental health and work are inter-related to each other. Employers and managers has to keep an eye on the initiatives taken for the promotion of mental health by proper counselling to mental disorders which increases the health of employees and employer's profitability.

1.3. Balance between mental health and work life

It is the responsibility of each employer to provide and keep up safety at workplace. Safety in the sense, it covers all the physical, financial and mental health. Employers has to ensure the optimization fit among the psychology of individual worker and physical working environment in order to bring down mental pressure and derogate pre-existing mental illness of their employees. Employers has to plan wisely and invest cost effectively to conceive a fair workplace which ensure the mental health of all their employees right from the top level decision management authorities to bottom level workers. It keeps the employees engaged and motivated, their self-confidence level will boosts up and in return their resultant output will be high.

2. LOSSES INCURRED DUE TO POOR MENTAL HEALTH

There are two types of losses incurred to the employers because of the poor mental health of their employees [2] and are

- (i) Direct costs
- (ii) Indirect costs

2.1. Direct costs

The following are the direct loss to the employer in terms of worker performance and income:

- ❖ Absenteeism – Medical leave, Casual leave and Loss of pay
- ❖ Turnover – Employee resigning his/her job in the middle of a project or the employee is terminated by the employer because of poor

- M.Panbarasan, Assistant Professor & SPE Ambassador Lecturer, Department of Petroleum Engineering, VISTAS, Chennai. e-mail: panbarasanpc@gmail.com
- R.Karthikeshwaran, Assistant Professor, Department of Petroleum Engineering, VISTAS, Chennai. e-mail: eskmi@gmail.com
- J.Sudharsan, Assistant Professor, Department of Petroleum Engineering, AMET UNIVERSITY, Chennai. e-mail: kjps047@gmail.com
- Vivek Thamizhmani, Assistant Professor, Department of Petroleum Engineering, VISTAS, Chennai. e-mail: vivek.thamizhmani@gmail.com

performance observed over a period of time due to mental illness

- ❖ Medi-claims & Medical leave – The mental illness aggravates from the pre-existing mental disease and newly developed mental injury due to the unfavorable working ambience and culture, the employee will go for medical leave for which the employer has to pay for the medical expenses, sanction medical leave and also pay for those leave days as compensation.

2.2. Indirect costs

The trailing are the indirect loss incurred to the employers as a result of poor mental health:

- ❖ Presenteeism – Employee will take more time to finish the project in a stipulated time, he/she is present physically and absent mentally by thinking about other things which has no connection with their allotted work.
- ❖ Reduced mental engagement – The employee doesn't take much effort and devote time both physically and mentally to engage himself/herself in the act of completion of the task assigned to him/her.
- ❖ Conflicts amongst the workers – There is a possibility of raising conflicts among the workers, where the highly paid worker didn't do his work and keep on demotivating, insulting and point out the small mistake in big manner which was done by a low paid but well-qualified and efficient worker who has high reputation and output which brought name and fame to the organization where he/she works. It will destabilize the mental health of the worker and he/she deviates from the task assigned to him/her and it results in the negative growth of the organization.

Out of the above three reasons for poor performance, Presenteeism found to be the most significant factor. A survey shows that approximately Rs.16 lakh crore was lost to the employers annually. [3] In general, the employers' looks and cares only about absenteeism in rare cases only they look over Presenteeism. A research reveals that productivity loss due to mental health illness is approximately Rs.1 Lakh per employee per year. Out of 100% of productivity loss to the company, 20% loss is due to absenteeism and the rest were associated with presenteeism. [4]

3. IMPACT OF MENTAL ILLNESS ON ORGANIZATIONS

In United States, the total compensation paid by companies towards absenteeism, reduction in productivity, medical insurance, medical expenses claimed by individuals which approximately ranges up to Rs.10.6 lakh crore per annum. [5] The Confederation of Industry association of UK took a survey on the cost involved in loss due to mental illness compensation annually is Rs.32000 crore in United Kingdom. [6] In Australia, the losses incurred by the companies towards mental illness is Rs.78000 crore approximately per year out of which Rs.33000 crore sum

was spent towards absenteeism, Rs.43400 crore over presenteeism and Rs.1000 crore on compensation claim towards mental illness and medical expenses. [7]

3.1. Level of employee engagement

In all the corners of the world, the employee engagement towards their job is low in industries having high quotidian works namely manufacturing and production. In those industries, the mentality of the management is towards the process outgrowth rather than the growth of the employee which was the reason for poor employee engagement. A statistics by Gallup comprises of data from 155 countries for three annual years from 2014-2016 shows that only 15% of employees are doing their work regularly, 67% of workers are came for the name sake and did their work partially and 18% of employees are not at all bothered about their work and actively wasting their job time. [8] Employee engagement is mainly relied on a working environment that provides self-reliance and encourages growth and development by people oriented managers. Unidentified and unreported mental illness among the employee leads to workplace disengagement as they believe themselves that the working environment is not safe to perform and report their mental illness to the employers. On the other hand, if the managers and top-level management is ailing from mental illness it leads to poor supervision of employees and work engagement.

3.2. Opprobrium of mental illness

Globally, mental illness is the most leading health problems in the workplace. Mental illness is the major reason for workplace disability nowadays; employers have to frequently organize the mental health programs. A study shows that 50% of the employers doesn't aware about the psychiatric ailments of their employee during the time of interview and appointment itself. [9]

3.3. Status of mental health

Around 30 crore people have experienced mental depression worldwide. A study exposes that the major reason for mental illness in Australia is due to the lack of experience and immature judgement by employer regarding the work ability of the employee where the employer does not aware of the pros & cons of mental health. Most of the workers told that there are two major reasons for their mental illness and are

- (i) Fear of loss of job &
- (ii) Personal judgement by employer

This can be overcome by giving mental health awareness education to the employee and role of personal judgement in the mental ability of the worker to the chief executive officer of the company. [1] A well constituted mental health program will reduce the mental illness which paves the way for the employers to encourage the high performing employees who suddenly gives low output to take care of the physically handicapped employee with personal care as the others teasing can't lead to mental illness.

4. MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE – A SAFETY MEASURE

Most of the employers believe that providing mental health program will be a benefit for their employees and their

wellbeing measure. But they have to change their perception that providing mental stability to their workers is a safety mandate which will bring effectiveness in the company. Disciplinary actions against the employers taken by the managers have an adverse effect in the profitability of a project. The manager has to look personally into the nature of the problem and its' root cause. If so, any mental illness related to it, he has to offer mental health support to him/her which will increase the morality thereby the workplace becomes active. A survey data between 2010-2015 regarding employees compensation claim shows that 91% of claim is due to mental stress. Mental stress is a condition where the employee is strained his/her neurological system and physical system to a maximum extent because of overload. [10]

The following are the most common mental stress and its percentage level worldwide:

- Work pressure – 31%
- Domination by senior employee – 27%
- Workplace violence – 14%

4.1. Role of executive officers in workplace mental health

Employers strongly believe their higher authorities and follow their footprints. The executives has to be highly attitudinal and good behavioral towards their employees which enables the mentally healthy workplace. This can reduce the level of absenteeism due to mental illness by 50% and more positive working environment. [11]

5. MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Mental health policy is to be framed for the employees of the organization which specifies and regulates how to manage and mitigate mental illness in the working environment.

5.1. Mental health procedure

Mental health policy is of no use unless or otherwise it is documented and a clear procedure and schedule is to be framed and governed by individuals for taking care of both work related and non-work related mental issues. A footpath is earmarked for the employers about how, where & whom to report and proceed to the mental illness in the workplace and its procedure is displayed in the workplace. [11]

5.2. Mental health operation and protagonism

The organization has to look after the mental health of their employees in a day-after-day basis and it also includes the self-reporting by employees. A procedure is followed for the safety response of workers mental health and its appealing authority. In an average, many of the employees does not wait for the support from their employers as there is no absolute number of existing policies, procedures and practices or they don't aware of that even if existed. The framed policy should be particular and precise which includes guidelines and responsibilities for every employee and their roles and needs for the enterprise. The policy should cover the responsibility of the top level management to low-level workers which covers the procedure for mitigation of work-related and personal mental health risks.

6. MENTAL ILLNESS

Any mental health concerned problems such as psychopathy, state of fear and thought of suicide due to the pre-existing or developing mental health problem is termed as mental illness.

6.1. Mental illness – A state of danger

Every year approximately 10 lakh employees commit suicide because of mental illness which is an area of major concern for employers. [1] Around 8 lakh youngsters of age group ranges 15-29 commit suicide every year and is the second most leading reason for death. Nearly 4.5 crore people encounter mental illness every year. [12]

6.2. Emergency Protocol for mental illness

If a worker is affected by mental illness, the immediate superseding authority is the first responder and he has been aware of the protocol; to be followed for the curing of mental illness of the worker. For that a protocol has to be framed, circulated and followed in case of emergency situation. Mostly, this protocol can be framed with the assistance and advice of psychologist, psychiatrist and voluntary mental health organizations. The set of procedures should be clearly explained to the officers and responded in detail about how to evaluate and react to the mental illness of the employee and co-worker.

6.3. Mental illness – Prevention is better than cure

A particular amount has to be allocated for the purpose of mental illness prevention and treatment. The return on investment (ROI) of that amount is calculated by the increased productivity and enhanced safety of the organization. This mental health program will aids in the identification and betterment of mental illness at the preliminary stage itself. The intensity of the mental illness varies by organization to organization. The organization has to maintain a track record that upto what extent of risk of mental health it is to be reported and what extent it remain kept as confidential till further treatment is needed. The mental illness is measured through consultation with managers and co-workers in concurrence with the personal human resources data consisting interpersonal conflict, complaints and duty performance. Mental illness varies from one work place to another; a risk analysis is to be performed prior to the implementation of mental health program in an organization.

7. MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

With the objective of achieving a mentally healthy working environment, it is the responsibility of everyone to create it. Mental health being the influential factor in the efficiency of workplace, it should begin from the influential person of an enterprise such as chairman, managing director and chief operating officer. They took the driver seat in the creation of policies and standard practices of mental health in workplace. They are well aware of the enterprise, working nature and knowledge of their employees. [11] The primary reason for workplace mental illness is due to the pressure put up by the managers towards his/her employees in their allocated job to do it on less-stipulated time. They never respond about the mental illness of his/her employees. Amateur managers don't have enough knowledge to understand the employee mental illness and what kind of

support needed to them. It is the duty of the managers to identify the mental illness of their employees which shows poor progress in their work. A group of 176 managers who are all in direct interaction with a minimum of 50 employers each was picked randomly. The managers were split up into two groups of 88 each. One group of 88 managers were given training by a non-profit mental health training organization named RESPECT and other group was left out. [13] The RESPECT mental health training program was offered to the 88 managers altogether for a duration of 4 hours. The trained managers were allowed to work in their enterprise for a period of six months; a study reveals that the sickness owing to work related mental illness is reduced considerably. A study shows that for each rupee paid towards a 4 hour mental health program fetches 10 times of it in return on investment because of the reduction in work related absenteeism. During the same period of study, the left out group of manager's organization shows an increase of 10 percent of absenteeism towards mental illness related problems. [13]

7.1. Tutelage to managers

The mental health training program to manager should comprises of recognition of poor augury of mental health, follow-up procedures, risk associated with it and performance management using other employees. The training enables the managers to identify and respond the sign of mental illness in a workplace. The manager has to be trained on how to report and respond the mental illness of an individual and monitoring of the recovery process.

7.2. Implementation of mental health program

During the process of recruitment for the post of manager and high level management officers it is mandated that they should met out the qualification of mental health training program. This program will ensure the human resources risk management and health claim representative to make sure that all the sections of the enterprises are responding to the mental illness of the employees and are consistently delivering their support to minimize it. Regular mental health training to managers at intermittent interval offers the managers to respond effectively on the mental illness of their employees in the workplace. It also gives more confidence to them in approaching the mental illness problems and leads to increase of individual performance of an employee.

8. MENTAL HEALTH IN OIL AND GAS SECTOR

Mental health among the working community of oil and gas industry is slighter reported problem but is a very serious issue. Generally the recruiters focused mainly on the physical health of the employee even though they know that working in oil and gas sector is highly stressful. The stress is due to the fact that they have been away from their families, drowsiness and physical ailments.

8.1. Decline in the crude price

For the past 5 years, the oil and gas industry witnessed the downfall of crude price for the last 25 years since 1990s. [17] As a result of this, there are no new projects and investments in the oil and gas operations. The companies reduced its producing capacity from existing wells to certain

extent owing to which they lay-off workers. Thus makes the workers to fear about the loss of job which increases anxiety, stress and loneliness. This condition will reduce the efficiency of the employees and impacts the growth of the industry.

8.2. Mental health speaks

Usually the managers have the thought of posting good physique employees, initially it yields better results but if the time moves on the productivity decreases. It indicates that the employee has to be fit both physically and mentally. As the oil and gas industry is always prone to problems right from exploration to marketing. The employees has to be mentally healthy to respond immediately to the emergency arises out in the operations and ready to work under pressure.

9. REASON FOR MENTAL ILLNESS IN OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Employers are the one who incurs more loss because of mental illness of employees. As the industry is highly competitive and involves huge investment, the company gives priority to profit not to the employees. They kept the mental health of the employee as the last priority where they underestimate the importance of it. The major reason for this is that there is no awareness about mental health in the industry. Apart from that due to non-availability of the data regarding the employees suffered from mental illness. When a problem/incident reported in the industry, the management looks out for the technical reason of the company not the mental illness of the employee associated with that. Due to these foresaid reasons, the employer found difficult to identify mental illness and how to respond it.

9.1. Role of employers in ensuring mental health

The employers have to identify the poor performance of the employees due to high workload and time pressure. This leads to mental illness due to stress and can be prevented by reducing work load and duration of working cycle. This allows the employees to refresh themselves and do their jobs in efficient manner. The employers can allow their workers to work freely without the permission from the management on their associated project and they can discharge their strategies and duties in achieving the goal. It does not imply that the employers don't have any control over them. It ensures the explicit decision-making process and motivation to the employees. There should always be an emotional and relational bond among the employers and employees. This will play a vital role in the understanding of their own responsibilities and the employees can work dedicatedly for the betterment of the company. It increases the mental health of the employees.

9.2. Types of mental health training

The employers must ensure the training on how to face mental illness and ways to mitigate it. Apart from that trainings should be given on emotional intelligence, safety procedures and related workshops to overcome stressful conditions. The industry should pay for those trainings. The managers also take part during the design and development of the courses for their employees because they only personally know about their very own employees.

The program was framed in such a way that it should respond to the day-to-day problems faced by employees. The training programs will attain its fulfillment when it reaches the employers and the objective of it. The employers must ensure the follow up of the training programs by sending satisfaction surveys and links for detailed report of submission of how they overcome the problems with the help of training program without disclosing their identity.

10. MENTAL HEALTH – FUNDAMENTAL ETHICS

A strong mental health will yields a better result both for employers and individuals. To ensure the mental health of the employees, all the employers will have to joint together and create a database for the mental health related issues in their enterprises, their strategy to overcome that and trainings organized. This facilitates the employers to concentrate more on the successful prevention of mental illness. Being exposed to an industry which is full of unpredictable nature, the students of various disciplines such as geologists, engineers, technicians, management trainees were given the necessity of mental health in their university level itself. If not possible, they can be trained during their period of training which gives moral strength to face the problems. [18]

10.1. Internship and project ensures mental health

During their graduation level itself, the on field and onsite projects will enable the students to understand the nature of the working environment and its associated risks involved and how it impacts the mental health. This helps the young professionals to respond immediately while facing the same risks which they encountered during training. [18]

10.2. Reason for mental illness

Anxiety and depression are more frequent in the oil and gas industry employees in comparison with other industries. A survey was conducted among the 1147 workers of different oil & gas operating and service companies and it reveals that anxiety and depression are the major reason for mental illness and 15% employees reported that. [15] Anxiety is due to the age, rotational length, number of years of service and working in foreign nations. Anxiety reduces with increases in the years of service and age of employees. Depression is due to low salary, heavy work load in comparison with others, family sentiments.

11. MENTAL RISK IN ONSHORE & OFFSHORE INDUSTRY

Generally the mental illness is high in oil and gas industry in comparison with other industries. A study shows that the offshore industry workers have higher risk of mental illness than onshore workers. [16]

11.1. Offshore – A place of high probability of mental illness

It is due to the fact that offshore work involves high-risk operations and special tasks. Because of the unpredictable nature of the ocean environment emergencies may arise out at any point of time. The rules & regulations, roles & responsibilities, work permit system, rotational length,

safety procedures, personal protective equipment is quite strict than the offshore. [16] Above all the offshore workers are working in a confined and isolated environment where all the sides are covered with water. They don't even have access to spend their time with local communities. Whether they like or dislike, they have to spend their entire time with the drilling crew. This makes them feeling lonelier and made them mentally sick. The mentally sick worker while performing the routine job has the probability of doing mistake which can cost the life of other workers. The employees encounter more problems from the employers because of target assigned which leads to mental illness. [25]

11.2. Mental illness – Loss to employers

If an employee suddenly quits a job due to mental illness, it leaves the employer in riskier position where they have to find an alternate person immediately or they recruit a new person and get him trained but this is time consuming process. To better avoid this rare case scenario, a mental health program has to be organized.

11.3. Steps to reduce mental illness

Apart from organizing mental health program, the employers needs to ensure the various measures to reduce mental illness of the employees and are

(i) Away day

Every year the employer has to organize a tour to the nearby picnic location of their company to all the departments of their enterprise which enables the members to develop a relational bond apart from workmanship. This allows the employees to share their riddles and hardship faced in their workplace which will reduce the stress and mental illness of them.

(ii) Counselling centers

A counselling center has to be established in the organization with a counselor on regular basis or weekly basis. This offers the employees to discuss their mental agony with the counselor and he/she will provide solution for that.

(iii) Yoga & Meditation

Yoga is good for physical and mental health. Meditation gives the inner peace to soul and psychological system. Both yoga and meditation has to be arranged for the employees to reduce their mental stress.

(iv) Tree plantation & Gardening around the workplace

The employee has to give an opportunity of planting a tree on his own in the barren land outside the workplace. Whenever he/she feels mentally down they can go there and water the plant and see the growth of it which will makes them to feel relax.

(v) Change of roles & responsibilities

After every three years the company has to change the employee from one section to other section which allows them to refresh themselves and do better in a newer environment with the previously gained experience. [24]

(vi) Surprise gifts

The company has to remember the dates of their employees such as birthday, wedding anniversary and give a gift on that days will makes the employees surprise and strengthen the relationship with the employer.

(vii) Medical insurance to the family

The company has to take care of the medical support needed to the family members of its employee who makes the employee to think more on the job rather than wasting his/her time in thinking about the family and developing a mental illness

(viii) Financial stability to the family in case of death

The company has to give financial compensation to the family members of the employees in case of death and physical disability during the working period. This will ensure the employee that after his period their family is safe and secure. So that he will be free from mental worries regarding the future of his family.

(ix) Spiritual tours

Every year the company has to organize a spiritual tour to their employees of their religious interest places covering a minimum of one week which allows them to refresh mentally. After returning, they can deliver their fullest in the company.

(x) Fun events & excursions

The company has to arrange fun events, sports and other recreational activities at regular intervals to ensure the mental relaxation of their employees. Once in a year, they have to arrange a tour to the employee along with their family members to a location where it is less explored which will allow them to spend their leisure time happily with their family members and friends without more exposure to the local peoples and other tourists. [22]

(xi) Visits to orphanages & schools for disabled

On the foundation day of the company or the birthday of the founder, the company has to arrange a visit to orphanages and physically & mentally challenged peoples home along with their employees. This makes the employee to feel freely and mingle with new people.

(xii) Change of working environment

Some of the employees are not happy with the working environment because of its ambience, noise disruptions and other physical factors. Care must be taken to change the working environment upto a certain extent based on the feedback of the employee. [23] All the above activities are to be carried out by the financial commitment from the employer. Thus allows the workers to get rid of mental illness and external pressure during and because of workplace.

12. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mental health is the key factor in the growth of the industry. So it is the duty of the employer to maintain the mental health of its employees by offering various training program by its own cost. Those cost can be taken as an investment not as expenditure which in turn yields higher rate of return. Mental health also reduces the direct and indirect costs associated with the mental illness of the employees. A good mental health reduces the number of absenteeism to a certain level. It is rightly told by a proverb "If wealth is lost nothing is lost If health is lost something is lost If character is lost everything is lost" Mental health is the major thing which has to be maintained good throughout the life for the betterment of individuals, family, industry and society. Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADHD - Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

WHO - World Health Organization

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